

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ARA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 TRSE-00 /081 W
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R 031544Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8099
INFO ALL EC CAPITALS
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY LISBON
USNMR SHAPE
USMISSION USNATO
USCINCEUR
DIA WASHDC
USMISSION USUN
AMEMBASSY DAKAR
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES
AMEMBASSY WARSAW
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
USMISSION USBERLIN
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
AMEMBASSY HELSINKI
AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE
AMCONSUL BORDEAUX
AMCONSUL LYON
AMCONSUL MARSEILLE
AMCONSUL NICE
AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

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USDOCOSOUTH FOR INTAF

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, FR
SUBJECT: ELECTIONS 1978 -- A LAST ROUND OF POLITICAL

POLLS

SUMMARY: THE FINAL POLLS FOR THE LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS (NONE ARE ALLOWED AFTER MIDNIGHT MARCH 4) CONFIRM ONCE AGAIN THE ELECTORAL TRENDS OF THE PAST 18 MONTHS -- THE LEFT REMAINS AHEAD, WITH AN EDGE IN FIRST-ROUND VOTING INTENTIONS RANGING FROM 51-45 (SOFRES) TO 50-47 (PUBLIMETRIE) AND WITH THE PROMISE OF PICKING UP ONE-HALF OR MORE OF THE ECOLOGY VOTE (3-4 PERCENT) ON THE SECOND ROUND. IMPORTANT UNCERTAINTIES REMAIN, HOWEVER, WHICH PREVENT MORE THAN INFORMED SPECULATION ON SECOND-ROUND RESULTS, MOST NOTABLY THE COMMUNIST POSITION ON ELECTORAL COOPERATION WITH THE SOCIALISTS. ALTHOUGH A MAJORITY OF PCF SUPPORTERS FAVOR SECOND-ROUND DESISTEMENT, THIS SAME ELECTORATE SEEMS SERIOUSLY CONFUSED AS TO THE ULTIMATE DECISION WHICH THE PARTY WILL MAKE. END SUMMARY

1. LAST OF THE POLLS: WITH THE LEGAL DEADLINE (MIDNIGHT MARCH 4) FOR THE PUBLICATION OF POLITICAL POLLS APPROACHING, TWO FINAL SURVEYS APPEARED MARCH 3 WHICH DO LITTLE TO CHANGE THE PRE-ELECTORAL SCENE:

-- FIGARO-SOFRES SHOWS 51 PERCENT FOR THE LEFT (28 PS/MRG, 21 PCF, 2 PSU/EXTREME LEFT), 45 PERCENT FOR THE OPPOSITION GAULLISTS.

-- AURORE-PUBLIMETRIE GIVES THE LEFT 50 PERCENT (27 PS/MRG, 21 PCF, 2 EXTREME LEFT), THE MAJOR-

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ITY 47 PERCENT AND THE ECOLOGISTS 3 PERCENT.

2. A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF VOTING INTENTIONS, HOWEVER, REMAIN LESS THAN FIRM. ACCORDING TO SOFRES, THE FOLLOWING PERCENTAGES OF VOTERS DECLARED THEIR CHOICE TO BE "PRACTICALLY DEFINITIVE": PCF 89, PS 81, UDF 79, RPR

86. AURORE FOUND 80 PERCENT OF THE INTENTIONS TO BE DEFINITIVE, AGAIN INDICATING THE PRESENCE OF A SIZEABLE UNDECIDED VOTE WHICH MOST OBSERVERS BELIEVE WILL TIP AT LEAST SLIGHTLY TOWARD THE MAJORITY.

3. WHO'S GOING TO WIN: THE ELECTORATE SEEMS AS CONFUSED AS THE EXPERTS ON THE PROBABLE OUTCOME OF THE CONTEST AS AURORE REPORTS 42 PERCENT WHO THINK THE LEFT WILL WIN, 40 PERCENT WHO THINK THE MAJORITY AND 18 PERCENT WITH NO OPINION. FIGARO-SOFRES, ON THE OTHER HAND, FOUND A 37-31 EDGE IN FAVOR OF THE MAJORITY WITH 32 PERCENT WHO SIMPLY SAID "I DON'T KNOW." IF LONDON BOOKMAKERS ARE ANY BETTER INFORMED, THE ODDS ON THE MAJORITY IMPROVED MARCH 1 TO 3-2 (UP FROM 5-4) WHILE THOSE ON THE LEFT REMAINED EVEN.

4. TRANSFER OF VOTES: STATISTICS ON THE SECOND-ROUND
TRANSFER OF VOTES ARE EQUALLY CLOUDY, ESPECIALLY ON THE
LEFT WHERE SOFRES FOUND 96-97 PERCENT OF THE COMMUNISTS
READY TO SUPPORT A BETTER-PLACED SOCIALIST BUT AUREORE
POLLED ONLY 82-84 PERCENT. SOFRES, CONVERSELY, FOUND
ONLY 44-47 PERCENT OF PS VOTERS READY TO VOTE FOR THE
PCF ON THE SECOND ROUND WHILE AUREORE PREDICTS 50-51 PER-
CENT. TO ARBITRATE BETWEEN THE TWO FIGURES ON COMMU-
NIST INTENTIONS, THERE IS ANOTHER MARCH 3 EFFORT BY

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LOUIS HARRIS/LE MATIN WHICH SHOWS 82 PERCENT OF COMMUNIST SUPPORTERS READY TO VOTE PS ON THE SECOND ROUND WITH 12 PERCENT EXPRESSING NO OPINION.

5. WILL THE PCF STEP DOWN?: ACCORDING TO LOUIS HARRIS, 41 PERCENT OF COMMUNIST VOTERS THINK PCF CANDIDATES WILL DEFER TO THE PS WINNER OF THE FIRST-ROUND PRIMARY. BUT THE PCF ELECTORATE IS OBVIOUSLY CONFUSED BY CHANGING PARTY TACTICS AS ANOTHER 16 PERCENT THINK THE PCF WILL NOT "DESIST" AT ALL, 13 PERCENT THINK THE COMMUNISTS WILL DO SO ONLY IN CERTAIN CIRCUMSCRIPTIONS AND ANOTHER 11 PERCENT FEEL THAT PCF CANDIDATES WILL STEP DOWN BUT WITHOUT CALLING ON THEIR SUPPORTERS TO VOTE PS. SHOULD THERE BE NO ELECTORAL ACCORD, 63 PERCENT OF THE COMMUNISTS WOULD VOTE FOR THE PCF CANDIDATE ON THE SECOND ROUND, WHILE 25 PERCENT WOULD DEFECT TO VOTE FOR THE BETTER-PLACED SOCIALIST.

6. STABILITY PREVAILS: THE NET RESULT OF THESE FINAL POLLS IS THAT THE ELECTORAL RACE HAS COME DOWN TO THE WIRE WITH NO SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IN THE FIRST-ROUND RAW SCORE (AT LEAST AS FAR AS THE POLLS ARE CONCERNED) FROM THE PREDICTIONS OF THE LAST 18 MONTHS. THE ALL-IMPORTANT TRANSFER OF VOTE STATISTIC IS AS DIFFICULT TO MEASURE AS EVER AND IS IN ANY CASE STILL HOSTAGE TO A LAST MINUTE PCF DECISION ON ELECTORAL COOPERATION. THE COMMUNISTS CONTINUE TO HOVER AROUND 21 PERCENT, BUT SEEM UNLIKELY TO CLOSE FURTHER THE ELECTORAL GAP WITH THE PS. WITHIN THE MAJORITY, THE RPR REMAINS SLIGHTLY AHEAD

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AND CAN BE EXPECTED TO INCREASE ITS EDGE DUE TO ITS SUPERIOR ORGANIZATION AND IMPLANTATION. IN SUM, THE POLITICAL LANDSCAPE AS PAINTED BY THE POLLSTERS SHOWS A REMARKABLE STABILITY WHILE AT THE SAME TIME HARBORING

ENOUGH MAJOR UNCERTAINTIES TO WORK IMPORTANT CHANGES AT
THE LAST MOMENT.
HARTMAN

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Message Attributes

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